



KAKEHASHI Project (Canada) In-person Alumni Meeting (Toronto) Follow-up Project Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Targeted at KAKEHASHI Project alumni, this program was held to commemorate an author talk event for the visual book “Tomey—The Unyielding Spirit of Tomekichi Homma,” which tells the story of Tomekichi Homma, an early immigrant who dedicated himself to equality and human rights for Asian Canadians.

The event was held at The Japan Foundation, Toronto, where participants were introduced to its programs and facilities. This provided an opportunity to encourage future visits and continued support. Through interactions among KAKEHASHI alumni and other guests, the program also helped raise awareness of the KAKEHASHI Project and foster sustained interest in Japan and Japanese culture.

【Participants】

- Total: 39 participants (KAKEHASHI Project alumni attendees 3, General attendees 36)
- Speakers: 3
 - Mr. Jeff Chiba Stearns – writer: “Tomey—The Unyielding Spirit of Tomekichi Homma”
 - Mr. Fabiano Takashi Rocha – Japanese Studies Librarian, University of Toronto – moderator
 - Mr. Ota Tomohiro – Consul, Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto

【Location】 Japan Foundation Toronto (JFT) library, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

【Schedule】

■ In-person Alumni Meeting Program: September 18 (Thu), 2025

5:00 pm Doors open

5:10 – 5:15 pm Welcome remarks

Speaker: Ms. Christine Nakamura, Vice-President, Central Canada Office, APF Canada

5:15 – 5:20 pm Opening remarks

Speaker: Mr. Ota Tomohiro, Consul, Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto

5:20 – 6:05 pm Moderated author talk

6:05 – 6:15 pm Q&A session

6:15 – 6:20 pm Book presentation to JFT, University of Toronto Japanese Studies Library, and the Consulate-General

6:20 – 6:25 pm Book raffle and signing

6:25 – 6:30 pm Closing remarks – Ms. Christine Nakamura, Vice-President

2. Program Photos



【Welcome Remarks】 Ms. Christine Nakamura, Vice-President, Central Canada Office, APF Canada



【Opening Remarks】 Mr. Ota Tomohiro, Consul, Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto



【Moderated Author Talk】



【Book Presentation】



【Book Raffle and Signing】



【Commemorative Photo】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

- Great event. Quite inspiring!
- Great to learn about the book writing process and that this space (JFT) exists.
- Hoping for more events with authors and illustrators/artists.

5. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

- The event was well attended with the space at capacity and very little attendee drop off.
- A survey conducted for Japan Foundation, Toronto following the event and completed by 88% of guest attendees, determined that 100% of respondents rated the event above average, and 89% felt the event had ‘considerably’ or ‘greatly’ increased their awareness of or interest in Japanese culture.
- Several participants mentioned they would return to JFT for future events and exhibitions.
- One KAKEHASHI alumnus who had never visited the site previously registered for a JFT library card and is looking into their language class offerings.
- Two of the three KAKEHASHI alumni had never joined an in-person/virtual alumni event prior to this.
- Speaker Ally Adachi (illustrator) was unable to join the discussion as her flight from Vancouver was delayed. She arrived in time to sign some books and pose for photos.
- The event was attended by a well-known Japanese Canadian author, a member of the Homma family and other individuals from the Toronto literary, arts and Japanese Canadian community.
- Prior to the event, Jeff Chiba Stearns was interviewed by local Japanese magazine “Ganbare” for an article to appear in their December edition.
- Books were presented to JFT, University of Toronto and the Consulate-General for their libraries.

6. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)



Great to see #Takehushi alumni and fans of Japanese Canadian history/books turn out last night at The Japan Foundation, Toronto for the "Tomey: The Unyielding Spirit of Tomekichi Homma" author talk. Sad that illustrator Ally Adachi's flight delay meant she couldn't join the discussion, but she squeaked in on time to sign some copies and take a few photos.

Signed copies of the book were donated to the JFT library, the Japanese Studies collection at University of Toronto, and the library of the Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto. Huge thanks to writer Jeff Chiba Stearns and moderator Fabiano Rocha for the enlightening discussion, to JFT for hosting, and to all who joined to learn about this under-recognized hero.

Want to download the book PDF? It will soon be available here:
<https://www.nccaa.ca/asian-canadian-curriculum-project/tomey-unyielding-spirit-tomekichi-homma>

@meditatingbunny @asiapacificfoundation @sallyyorangeart
 @cgipanto
 #KakehashiCanada #KakehashiProject #Kakehashi2025 #NCCAAI
 @Brocha

September 20, 2025 (Instagram)

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Implementation Agency: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada)